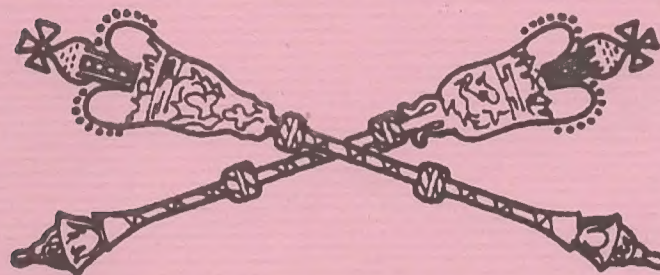


MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



BY

His Excellency
The Governor General

ON FRIDAY THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF DECEMBER 1984

His Excellency Sir Paul Scoon, GCMG, OBE

of the Third Parliament

THRONE SPEECH

28th December, 1984

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament, My Government hail the return of Parliamentary democracy and thank all those countries which have assisted in making this possible. My Government acknowledge with thanks the assistance from the British Government in refurbishing the parliament building and the gift from Plessey's Airport Ltd. of the sound re-inforcement and recording system.

My Government will provide new opportunities for citizens to take part in the decisions that affect their everyday lives and to this end will introduce a system of local Government in the various parishes and villages. It is proposed, through both formal and non-formal education, to make citizens more aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities, and steps will be taken to ensure that all Grenadians not only respect those in authority, but also jealously guard our democratic institutions and conserve the best traditions of our country. The rule of law will be of paramount importance.

Mindful of our difficulties since Independence, my Government pledge to ensure that all fundamental human rights and freedom guaranteed under the United Nations Charter and under our own Constitution are upheld. In the light of experience, and conscious of the experiments in Government that our people have been subjected to in the name of democracy, My Government will have as a top priority constitutional reform aimed at eliminating abuse of power by elected representatives and ensuring greater participation in governmental affairs by the people. It is proposed to set up machinery to provide the necessary checks and balances against any abuse of power and individual freedom; and this will include the removal from office of those who are not working in the best interest of the people.

My Government will strengthen the nation's security. For some time to come, it will be necessary to retain the services of the Caribbean Peace-Keeping Force, and the American Military Police, for logistical, technical and other back-up support as the Royal Grenada Police Force proceeds with its programme of improvement — numerically and qualitatively. My Government will move especially rapidly to improve the quality of the top echelon of the Royal Grenada Police Force.

They will insulate the police from coercive political influence or undue interference, and will give it resources and the necessary training to make it into a professional force which the Grenadian people can trust, and of which they can be justly proud. It is proposed to establish a Police Service Commission with responsibilities for promotions, dismissals and general discipline of the Force. High standards of discipline must go hand in hand with any worthwhile programme of development, and steps will be taken to bring back discipline in all facets of Grenadian life — in school, in work places, on our roads, on the playing fields and particularly when our sportsmen and sportswomen travel abroad to represent Grenada.

My Government affirm their commitment to the United Nations, and will work relentlessly in supporting its peace-keeping role. They will make their contribution towards bringing about lasting peace in so many troubled areas of

the world. My Government firmly support the Commonwealth, and will play their part in developing and strengthening it. My Government accept the concept of Caribbean Unity, and will endeavour to work with the CARICOM partners, to make this unity real. My Government believe that greater opportunities should be provided for ordinary citizens of the Caribbean Community to meet one another without let or hindrance. In keeping with the true spirit of CARICOM, my Government will be very reluctant to do anything to pose even the slightest difficulty or inconvenience to citizens of other CARICOM countries wishing to travel to Grenada for legitimate purposes. My Government will work towards the strengthening of the Organisation of East Caribbean States.

My Government fully support the Organisation of American States and will strive to strengthen their trade relations with North America, the EEC, South and Central America especially Venezuela, Brazil and Mexico. My Government are opposed to all forms of totalitarianism and apartheid, and their foreign policy will exclude friendship with any nation which does not allow religious freedom. My Government will maintain relations with traditional friends but will review certain relationships with a view to preventing the imposition of any philosophy which is hostile to our parliamentary democratic lifestyle, or which is foreign and repugnant to the way of life of the Grenadian people.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government are deeply concerned that there are so many missing Grenadians still unaccounted for since that fateful October day of last year. My Government will, therefore, as soon as practicable, set up a full-scale Commission of Inquiry into the horrendous events and circumstances surrounding the 19th October, 1983.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government have inherited one of the grimest situations in the history of the Public Finances of Grenada, as a result of massive debts and a bloated Public Service structure created by the previous regime. As of 30th November, 1984, the total debt of the Country had reached a staggering figure of \$164,804,020.00. This represents approximately two years revenue (or twice times the annual revenue of Grenada). This colossal debt burden is likely to have significant implications for the Public Finances for some time to come, as the already over-strained taxable capacity of the Country cannot generate the revenue to service this huge debt.

In addition, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the Public Service has reached prodigious proportions, annually costing the Government in excess of 50% of recurrent Revenue. This is mainly due to a large degree of over-staffing which cannot be sustained by a small, fledgling economy such as Grenada's.

These two factors have already contributed to the overall deficit of \$37.2 million projected by the Ministry of Finance to the 31st December, 1984.

It is small wonder, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this Country have been subjected to such severe and suffocating systems of taxes that have left them with little incentive to productive effort. My Government have been distressed by some of the piercing stories recounted by countless Grenadians of the rape by the existing tax system of their Christmas bonuses (or backpay) to which they had eagerly looked forward with the hope of providing their families with something special for the festive season. The inequities in the Property Tax structure also cry out loud for correction, while the present panoply of Customs Duties and charges are resulting in considerable erosion of the living standards of the people.

In 1985, therefore Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, my Government as a matter of deliberate policy, will be designing and adopting strategies to correct the present deficiencies in the Public Finances as a whole, and the tax system in particular. My Government propose to introduce comprehensive Fiscal Reform, providing for the reduction of the heavy tax burden; for the control and reduction of the Public Debt; and for the large scale re-organisation of the Public Service with a view to bringing the number of Public Servants within manageable proportions, compatible with efficiency, economy and effectiveness.

In this connection, my Government have already arranged through the U.K. Government for the recruitment of a team of Organisation and Methods Consultants for the specific purpose of rationalising the Public Service. In the face of the grim and parlous state of the Public Finances, such an exercise is inevitable and a prerequisite to the consideration of any requests that might be forthcoming for increases in the wages of Public Officers.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, as a means of stimulating the economy, and more importantly, of laying the foundations for sound and stable economic development, my Government propose to embark on a massive island-wide road re-construction and repair programme that would also provide employment for large numbers of people. In particular, my Government propose to look into the matter of improving technology of road building and road repair so as to make such an occupation attractive to our young people who are increasingly being drawn to road work.

Other Public utilities such as the telephone, electricity and water supply are to be given urgent attention for improvement, both for our national convenience as well as to encourage local and foreign investment to provide sorely needed employment opportunities.

My Government will shortly establish an Industrial Development corporation to attract and guide investing entrepreneurs towards labour intensive industries. They will welcome further investments in hotel construction and other tourist facilities. They will also organise and expand the local handicraft industry; will give special support for the development of small and medium size businesses and will generally encourage Grenadian entrepreneurs.

Agriculture remains the main stay of our economy. It is proposed to make Grenada self-sufficient in food, thus the Agriculture base will be diversified, and farmers will be encouraged to grow a variety of crops, making the maximum and optimum use of arable lands. Efforts will be made to increase the production and the consumption of fish. There are also plans for the improved management and conservation of our forests.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker

There can be no meaningful development without proper education and training programmes for our citizens.

It is proposed to place more emphasis on English, Mathematics and Science at the school level and to take steps to raise the quality of student performance. My Government's policy on Adult Education is aimed at raising the competency and skills of adults thus enabling them to find gainful employment and to improve

their job performance. The matter of refurbishing existing schools will be treated as one of urgency. Special attention will be given to the upgrading of the skills of teachers and much emphasis will be placed on vocational and technical education as well as on research and curriculum development.

My Government will vigorously promote culture and will encourage and support the preservation of our cultural heritage. The energies of the youth will be channelled into productive action to enhance national growth. My Government will support the development of sport, will encourage wider participation and will promote higher standards of performance.

It is proposed to introduce a Health Care Programme throughout the State including primary health care. There will be emphasis on preventive care, upgrading of the hospitals, improving facilities for training of nurses and the refurbishing of clinics in the various districts, and ensuring the adequacy of the supply of drugs in the hospitals and government pharmacies.

My Government are determined to improve the housing situation especially among citizens in the lower income bracket and in their housing policy will concentrate on the construction of homes which will improve the quality of family life and child development. My Government will also make it easier for people to acquire their own homes.

My Government call on every Grenadian to play his or her part in the reconstruction effort.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament, it is now my pleasure to declare the third Parliament of Grenada open and I pray God's guidance and blessing on your deliberations.

GRENADA.

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